DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 412 324 UD 031 949

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TITLE	Success for All: Exploring the Technical, Normative, Political, and Socio-Cultural Dimensions of Scaling Up. Report No. 16.
INSTITUTION	Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk, Baltimore, MD.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1997-09-00
NOTE	28p.
CONTRACT	R-117-D40005
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Disadvantaged Youth; *Educational Change; Elementary Education; Norms; Political Influences; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Program Implementation; *School Restructuring; Sociocultural Patterns; Surveys; *Teachers; *Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS	Reform Efforts; *Success for All Program

ABSTRACT

This report explores the technical, political, and socio-cultural dimensions of the scaling up process of Success for All (SFA), one of the nation's most successful and extensively researched whole-school change models. SFA, a reform effort aimed at elementary schools serving disadvantaged children, is currently being implemented in over 475 schools. Data for this report, developed through qualitative and quantitative methods, come from a stratified sample of over 300 SFA schools across the country. Survey data were collected from approximately 325 educators. This research suggests that fundamental change in schools occurs and is sustained when the technical, normative, political, and socio-cultural dimensions of schooling are given thoughtful and serious consideration throughout the implementation process. Schools implementing SFA that report success in improving educational outcomes for their students explicitly demonstrate willingness and ability to confront the challenges that are inherent in the change process. Exploring school change from multiple conceptual lenses deepens our understanding of the structures, strategies, practices, and relationships associated with fundamental change in schools. As schools prepare for the next millennium, it is essential that new reform strategies be comprehensive and able to change the organization and operation of schools fundamentally. (Contains seven references.) (Author/SLD)

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CRESPAR

SUCCESS FOR ALL

Exploring the Technical, Normative, Political, and Socio-Cultural Dimensions of Scaling Up

Robert Cooper • Robert E. Slavin • Nancy A. Madden

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Report No. 16 / September 1997

CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS PLACED AT RISK

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Published by the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR), supported as a national research and development center by funds from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education (R-117-D40005). The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of OERI, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

The Center

Every child has the capacity to succeed in school and in life. Yet far too many children, especially those from poor and minority families, are placed at risk by school practices that are based on a sorting paradigm in which some students receive high-expectations instruction while the rest are relegated to lower quality education and lower quality futures. The sorting perspective must be replaced by a "talent development" model that asserts that all children are capable of succeeding in a rich and demanding curriculum with appropriate assistance and support.

The mission of the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR) is to conduct the research, development, evaluation, and dissemination needed to transform schooling for students placed at risk. The work of the Center is guided by three central themes — ensuring the success of all students at key development points, building on students' personal and cultural assets, and scaling up effective programs — and conducted through seven research and development programs and a program of institutional activities.

CRESPAR is organized as a partnership of Johns Hopkins University and Howard University, in collaboration with researchers at the University of California at Santa Barbara, University of California at Los Angeles, University of Chicago, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, University of Memphis, Haskell Indian Nations University, and University of Houston-Clear Lake.

CRESPAR is supported by the National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students (At-Risk Institute), one of five institutes created by the Educational Research, Development, Dissemination and Improvement Act of 1994 and located within the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) at the U.S. Department of Education. The At-Risk Institute supports a range of research and development activities designed to improve the education of students at risk of educational failure because of limited English proficiency, poverty, race, geographic location, or economic disadvantage.

Abstract

This report explores the technical, normative, political, and socio-cultural dimensions of the scaling up process of Success for All, one of the nation's most successful and extensively researched whole-school change models. This research suggests that fundamental change in schools occurs and is sustained when the technical, normative, political, and socio-cultural dimensions of schooling are given thoughtful and serious consideration throughout the implementation process. Schools implementing SFA which report success in improving educational outcomes for their students explicitly demonstrate a willingness and ability to confront the challenges that are inherent in the change process. Exploring school change from multiple conceptual lenses deepens our understanding of the structures, strategies, practices, and relationships associated with fundamental change in schools. As we prepare for schools to enter into the next millennium, it is essential that new reform strategies be comprehensive and able to fundamentally change the organization and operation of schools.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to all the educators across the country who made this research possible. Special thanks to JHU facilitators, Judith Ramsey, Connie Fuller, Rachel Nicholas, Alta Shaw, and Randi Suppe for their continued support in our research of Success for All.

Introduction

Numerous national studies and reports over the last decade have documented the struggles and failures of public education. With increasing levels of mediocrity and ineffectiveness, particularly in urban schools, a call for the total restructuring of schools has gone out. In response to this call, a number of whole-school reform programs have emerged. Although the viability of externally developed whole-school change reform has been part of the educational discourse for several decades, the recent success of several schoolwide change models has reignited the debate. Following the Rand Change Agent Study in the mid 1970s, initiating bottom up change that was tailored to a specific local context was thought to be the most effective way to achieve fundamental change in schools. However, recent promising research data from several externally developed whole-school reform efforts call this notion into question. The idea that fundamental school change can occur only when reform ideas are interpreted, modified, and implemented in a specific context by individual school communities is being revisited. The question is no longer whether externally developed school reform initiatives can be effective in improving outcome measures for students, but rather, under what conditions do they work best? And how they are institutionalized to ensure longevity?

With a proven track record of being doable, effective, and replicable, the issue for externally developed schoolwide change models is one of scale up (Slavin, 1997). As Elmore (1996) reminds us, replicating educational change and success on a large scale is a difficult task.

This report presents first-year data from a three-year scaling up study of Success for All (SFA), one of the nation's most successful and extensively researched whole-school change models. With a decade of research documenting its impact on public education, Success for All has proven to be an effective tool for urban school reform. SFA is a comprehensive elementary school restructuring program which has successfully translated the call for change into practice. The scaling up study of SFA is one of the first comprehensive studies using a mixed method analysis exploring the contextual factors which contribute to the successful replication and scaling up efforts of a whole-school change model. Preliminary data suggest that to accomplish the task of scaling up, the complex and interrelated factors which guide program implementation must be identified and understood. Identifying the individual and collective influence of the constellation of factors which determine quality, fidelity, and sustainability of program implementation is critical to the scaling up process. Understanding the factors which contribute to the successful replication and scaling up of Success for All

enhances our knowledge of how a well-structured, researched-based restructuring program can be replicated on a national scale.

This analysis uses a conceptual framework which views school change from four distinct, yet overlapping dimensions. Each dimension serves as a conceptual lens which illuminates how factors are institutionalized to ensure the quality and longevity of the program. This conceptual framework gives insight to how effective schoolwide change models can be scaled up into widespread usage in our nation's schools, especially in the urban schools that need them the most. The goal of this research is to provide insight into the implementation process of a comprehensive set of changes in school organization, curriculum, and teaching and to provide guidance to educators, policy makers, and researchers who all agree that change in our public education system is needed, but lack certainty regarding how to best lead, implement, and manage the process of change. The lessons learned here can inform reform efforts, both on a local and national level.

Conceptual Framework

To understand the interconnectedness of the contextual factors that contribute to SFA's success as a schoolwide restructuring effort, we build upon the work of Oakes (1992), who uses a variety of conceptual lenses to understand school reform. Oakes argues that multiple conceptual lenses provide a more comprehensive picture of the complexities of the structures, strategies, practices, and relationships associated with school change. She suggests that an analysis that focuses on the technical, normative, and political dimensions of schooling is focusing on the dimensions of schooling that are critical to the reform process. Given the vastly diverse settings of Success for All's implementations, we have added a fourth lens to this analysis — a socio-cultural lens. This lens focuses on the social, cultural, and environmental factors that affect school reform, but are oftentimes given little attention. Adding this fourth dimension to our analysis gives us greater insight to the constraints and challenges faced by many urban school communities.

School reform, of course, does not divide discreetly into four dimensions. But these dimensions of schooling tap into the energy source of most school communities and therefore require serious consideration before fundamental change in schools can occur. As Oakes argues, "Viewing schools from technical, normative, political, (and we would add, socio-cultural) lenses allows traditional school practices to be examined in the context of the beliefs, values, relationships, and power allocations that keep them in place" (Oakes, 1992).

Major Elements of Success for All

Success for All is a schoolwide program for students in grades pre-K to five which organizes resources to attempt to ensure that virtually every student will reach the third grade on time with adequate basic skills and build on this basis throughout the elementary grades, that no student will be allowed to "fall between the cracks." The main elements of the program are as follows:

1. *Tutors.* In grades 1-3, specially trained certified teachers work one-to-one with any students who are failing to keep up with their classmates in reading. Tutorial instruction is closely coordinated with regular classroom instruction. It takes place 20 minutes daily during times other than reading periods.

2. *A Schoolwide Curriculum.* During reading periods, students are regrouped across age lines so that each reading class contains students all at one reading level. Use of tutors as reading teachers during reading time reduces the size of most reading classes to about 20. The reading program in grades K-1 emphasizes language and comprehension skills, sound blending, and use of shared stories that students read to one another in pairs. The shared stories combine teacher-read material with phonetically regular student material to teach decoding and comprehension in the context of meaningful, engaging stories. In grades 2-5, students use novels or basals but not workbooks. This program emphasizes cooperative learning activities built around partner reading, identification of characters, settings, problems and problem solutions in narratives, story summarization, writing, and direct instruction in reading comprehension skills. At all levels, students are required to read books of their own choice for twenty minutes at home each evening. Classroom libraries of trade books are provided for this purpose. Beginning in the second year of implementation, cooperative learning programs in writing/language arts are introduced in grades K-5.

3. *Preschool and Kindergarten.* The preschool and kindergarten programs in Success for All emphasize language development, readiness, and self-concept. Preschools and kindergartens use thematic units, Peabody Language Development Kits, and a program called Story Telling and Retelling (STaR).

4. *Eight-Week Assessments.* Students in grades K-3 are assessed every eight weeks to determine whether they are making adequate progress in reading. This information is used to suggest alternate teaching strategies in the regular classroom, changes in reading group placement, provision of tutoring services, or other means of meeting students' needs.

5. ***Family Support Team.*** A family support team works in each school to help support parents in ensuring the success of their children, focusing on parent education, parent involvement, attendance, and student behavior. This team is composed of existing or additional staff such as parent liaisons, social workers, counselors, and vice principals.

6. ***Facilitator.*** A program facilitator works with teachers to help them implement the reading program, manages the eight-week assessments, assists the family support team, makes sure that all staff are communicating with each other, and helps the staff as a whole make certain that every child is making adequate progress.

Design and Research Methods

Data Source

Using both quantitative and qualitative research methods, data for this report come from a stratified sample of over 300 SFA schools across the country. A variety of data collection strategies were used: surveys, one-on-one interviews, group interviews, focus groups, and school site observations. An in-depth description of the data collection strategies used can be found in Cooper and Slavin (1997).

Survey data were collected from approximately 325 educators involved in the implementation of Success for All. Two survey instruments were developed — one for school principals and one for school site facilitators. The questionnaires were designed to provide a snapshot of the implementation process of the program in different school contexts. These survey instruments helped identify patterns of behavior, activities, and attitudes that influence the replicability and scaling up efforts of the program across various contexts. Furthermore, this data collection strategy attempted to capture information regarding the school norms and politics which affect the technical implementation of the program. Survey questions focused on how the school learned of SFA, who the key players were in its implementation, the obstacles that schools faced in establishing SFA, and the difficulties in sustaining the reform.

The school site facilitator and principal surveys were initially sent out in June of 1996. That and subsequent mailings yielded 165 completed school site facilitator surveys and 161 principal surveys. The completed surveys represent a response rate for facilitators and principals of 44% and 43%, respectively. These 326 responses represent over 200 elementary schools across the United States.

The quantitative data are augmented by qualitative data collected from intensive case studies. Based on the data received from the surveys, a stratified sample of 20 schools was selected for closer observation. The sample was stratified on three dimensions: quality of implementation, number of years implementing the program, and racial/ethnic composition of the student body. The primary methodological strategies used to gather information in these case studies were interviews and observations conducted with site facilitators, principals, and appropriate district-level officials. Although scheduling conflicts necessitated some group interviews, most interviews were conducted one-on-one. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. Additionally, interview notes were taken, consisting primarily of words, ideas, and key phrases that captured the language and emotions of the interviewee. These intensive case studies provided opportunities to examine questions that were explored quantitatively but whose importance might have gone undetected without closer examination. Additionally, because SFA is one of the most extensively evaluated school-change programs, previous research efforts gave insight to the current research questions.

Data Analysis

The data for this report were analyzed using the conceptual framework outlined earlier. The data were filtered through four conceptual lenses. These lenses provided a perspective that was broad enough to make linkages between the multiplicity of factors contributing to the successful implementation of SFA, and sensitive enough to highlight the nuances of the individual schools.

Survey data in this study were triangulated with data collected in interviews and observations. Particular attention was paid to how well schools developed the desired structures, engaged in the intended activities, and embodied the guiding principles. The goal of this analysis was to document the evolution of the implementation process and provide insight into the factors that contribute to SFA's successful replication and scaling up efforts.

Preliminary Findings

National Survey and Case Study Data

Success for All is a comprehensive reform effort aimed at elementary schools serving disadvantaged students. It is currently being implemented in over 475 schools, 120 districts,

and 31 states nationwide (Slavin & Madden, 1996).[1] Over a quarter of a million children are currently being served by the program. As the program continues to expand, research continues to document increases in reading levels of students all over the country. A recent review of this research found that on average, Success for All first graders exceed controls by three months in reading; by fifth grade, their advantage is more than a full grade equivalent. Effects are particularly strong for the most at-risk students and for reducing special education placement (Slavin et al., 1996).

The demographic profile of the schools represented in our sample suggests that the program is reaching its targeted population: low income, educationally disadvantaged children. The data show that the majority of SFA schools (54%) are medium-sized elementary schools with populations of 500 to 700 students. SFA schools tend to be located in large cities (53%), in districts where several other schools are also implementing the program. The racial demographic profile of SFA schools suggests that most of the schools are racially segregated. Sixty-five percent of the schools surveyed indicate that a majority of their student population is of one race or ethnicity; 24% indicate a majority African American, 0% Asian, 19% Hispanic/Latino, 22% White. Eighty-five percent of the responding schools indicate that over 50% of their children receive free or reduced lunch. The attendance rates at these schools vary from a low of 87% to a high of 98%.

Principals

The mean number of years served by the principals in this sample is 5.9. The years of service ranges from 1 to 24. Many of the principals surveyed indicated that they were experienced educators who have negotiated, led, and managed school reform. According to this group, there are four important ways in which information regarding SFA was initially communicated to their schools: SFA video (72%), awareness presentations (71%), visits to other SFA schools (69%), and research articles (62%). Over 90% of the principals indicated that principal support is critical to the adoption of urban school reform in general and SFA in particular. Therefore, identifying effective methods of informing principals of educational innovations is crucial to change in our public schools and to the scaling up efforts of SFA.

When asked to identify the most important factors in a successful implementation of SFA, the principals' responses clustered in three major areas: the school's commitment to

[1] Success for All has also been adapted for implementation in Canada, Australia, Israel, and Mexico.

reform, program structure, and teacher training. The first area, school commitment to the reform, reflects the principals' belief that strong support for reform must be consistent from the top down. When asked about the need for support in the implementation of SFA, 57% of the principals reported that district support was necessary. Ninety-three percent of the principals said that teachers were important and 79% believe that principals themselves were also vital to success of reform efforts.

Several principals in the qualitative research spoke about the issue of "buy-in." One principal in Florida commented that "buy-in" was crucial to any reform effort. She stated that if reform efforts fail, they do so because of a lack of commitment on the part of the teachers and the administration. Regarding reform failure, she said,

> I think it's lack of commitment, because if you truly want to do what it is you're trying to do...to change things, there will be some change. Perhaps not to the degree that you want, but you'll make some gains. But if you're not committed to it, it won't happen.

Another important factor in assuring quality implementation is that the program has a specific structure. Seventy-one percent of the principals indicated that this is important. A moderate number of principals also reported several specific program components that highly affect the overall quality of implementation of their programs: effective tutoring (52%), regrouping (81%), reduced class size (50%), and cooperative learning (50%). One principal in a Florida school stated that the structure of the program benefits not only students, but also teachers. She said,

> ...there's one nice thing about this Roots part of it, any idiot, all they have to do is read this, you know. I've said to many people that come to visit, 'I'll tell you one thing, if you have non-reading teachers when you start Roots, you will have reading teachers when you end.' Any school who gets a teacher who transfers out, and Roots is in the new schools, is going get a dynamite reading teacher if they get nothing else.

Echoing that sentiment, a principal from Arizona stated,

> It [preparation] was an issue for some people who had been used to flying by the seat of their pants. Depending on how they felt determined how prepared they were. I think this way there is no question that you have to be prepared. There is nō leniency in the schedule. You need to be prepared for every activity that is going on in the classroom that day. And I think it's made a big difference. [I think that was very hard for the teachers at first before SFA because there was no accountability].

This principal indicated that the sharing of students for reading has created an increased sense of accountability that was needed at her school. She said that because teachers not only

have their own students for reading, but also their colleagues', the children go back to their homeroom teacher and tell what they did in reading.

The third area deemed important by the principals is teacher training. Seventy-three percent of the principals reported that training is an essential component of a successful implementation of the program. The rapid growth of the program generated several different training models to be explored. Data would suggest that small training sessions that are tailored to individual schools seemed to work better and helped teachers to retain more information. One school, part of a large district with many SFA schools, shared its initial training with several other schools in the district. The training took place in a large auditorium. This training strategy was developed to help defray initial training costs to districts with large numbers of SFA schools. The consensus, however, from the officials with whom we spoke, was that training needs would have been better met in a smaller, more relaxed atmosphere. One school site facilitator who attended a smaller, more intimate training session, found the training to be more useful. She indicated, "...the training was fabulous because we were all in school, on school business." Officials from Alaska jokingly stated that their selection of SFA as a schoolwide project was greatly driven by the new regulations for Title I, which require the availability of staff development. She stated, "We did not have much of a choice...Who is available to come and train in Alaska?" Although joking, this school official brings to light a very important issue. With new Title I regulations requiring staff development, options are often limited for schools looking for schoolwide restructuring programs.

An official at one school in Alaska suggested that the initial training be less theoretical and more focused on practical issues. Given the highly prescriptive nature of the program, she felt it was important for teachers to get as many of the nuts and bolts before implementing the program. She stated,

> ...if we could have had less time on philosophy at that point [the initial training], and more on the nitty-gritty, that would have been helpful. I don't think we really needed all the philosophy of the program. We had already voted, we were already committed to this program. We needed to know what to do Monday morning. I needed to know how to do the program.

Facilitators

Day-to-day management of SFA is the responsibility of the school site facilitator. Although the job is "tough" and "demanding," most facilitators express enormous job satisfaction. Many of them measure their success as facilitators by how well teachers master the SFA model. Several facilitators spoke about the difficulty of getting teachers to follow the

program as it is designed. Initially, some teachers, particularly veteran teachers, find the highly prescriptive nature of the program too constraining. They agree that there are components of the program that they find helpful, but they fail to view the program as a comprehensive reform effort. According to one school site facilitator in Florida, the resistance on the part of teachers is not to the structure of the program, but to the enormous amount of additional preparation time required for them to be ready to teach each day. She said,

> It's a lot of work. Roots and Wings both is a lot of work, a lot of preparation....It's not fluff, you have to be prepared, and you have to work....You just can't go in and do it off the cuff, and a lot of people resent that...I mean, they resent the amount of work, and the amount of grading, entering, and producing,...a lot of people don't like it.

The adoption of SFA requires a faculty vote of 80%, but many teachers vote for the program not fully aware of the amount of teacher preparation time that is required. School site facilitators have developed a variety of strategies to deal with resistant teachers. One facilitator stated that her strategy of dealing with resistant teachers is to be in the classroom every day modeling the desired behaviors, strategies, and techniques that are required in the adoption of the program. Her strategy is to help teachers to be creative in their style and approach while retaining fidelity to the model. This facilitator commented that she felt the most important factor in assuring quality implementation of the program is getting in the classrooms and observing teachers actually implementing the program. She stated,

> In this particular school, the atmosphere for the program is that it is not to be altered...not having optional parts, maintaining the fidelity of the model. We adhere to the quality teaching and maintaining the classroom in certain fashions...all those things come from a combination of the principal and myself working very close, very hard, and making sure, and going into those classrooms all the time. You can't miss a day. If you miss a day, you take two steps backward, and the next day you're going to work much harder....I don't know what they do when I close the door, but while I'm there, I at least have some idea of what's going on.

Many facilitators have commented that over time, the greatest resisters to the program become some of the program's biggest advocates.

As overseers of the program's implementation, facilitators were asked to evaluate the quality of implementation of several of the key strategies and components of the SFA program. Consistent with the qualitative findings, the majority of facilitators reported that their schools were meeting or exceeding expectations.

Rate the Quality of Implementation

	Meets or Exceeds Expectations
Story Telling and Retelling (STaR) *(Comprehension strategy)*	91%
Peabody Language Development *(Provides models for language use and expression, as well as development of specific vocabulary skills.)*	81%
Cooperative Learning	85%
PK/K Thematic units	68%
Individual Tutoring	91%
Beginning Reading Program *(Reading Roots)*	96%
Beyond the Basics *(Reading Wings)*	91%

One facilitator, excited about the quality of implementation at her school, discussed how SFA has not only increased the children's love of and interest in reading, but has positively influenced the school culture. She talked about how the use of the SFA management signals has provided a common language for the teachers to use to enforce appropriate behavior, both inside and outside of the classroom. She stated,

> There has been a reduction in the number of suspensions, indoor and outdoor. There's been a reduction in the number of referrals. There's been a reduction in the number of children that are asked to go into counseling. I mean, you know, I know that from last year. And I attribute that to the Roots and Wings program. We need more.

Overall, the majority of principals and facilitators report a good, solid implementation of the program. As the qualitative research suggests, school communities are excited about the program and are working hard to fine tune it. They realize that they must replicate the model if they are to replicate the positive documented results. While the degrees of support of the program vary across the country from school to school, one facilitator's enthusiasm for the program, which is representative of many of the school officials encountered during the course of this research, speaks of the real possibilities of urban school reform in this country. She stated:

> I'm probably one of your best advocates. I love this program. I have a girlfriend who was at another school and now she's at a *Success for All* school. She said, 'you know, I can see now why you sing its praises,' and why you love it. She said, 'I've never seen you so happy.' I said, 'well, you know, what's not to be happy about.' It's meeting all our needs and it's addressing everything I can think of that the child needs. What more could you ask for?

Institutionalizing Systemic Supports for Urban School Reform: Technical, Normative, Political, and Socio-cultural Considerations

While none of the elements of Success for All are completely new or unique, what makes Success for All most distinctive is that it is schoolwide, coordinated, and proactive. The implementation of Success for All requires substantial changes not only in curriculum and instruction, but also in the roles, relationships, and structures in the schools. This challenges the conventional wisdom of many school communities regarding how schools should be organized and operated. In SFA, attention is focused on providing every student with the support system he/she needs to be a successful reader by the end of the third grade. Given that students learn to read in different ways and at different rates, SFA institutes a variety of support systems that increases the probability of all students being successful. Two basic principles guide the implementation of the Success for All program — prevention and intervention (Slavin et al., 1994). Because success in elementary school is almost synonymous with success in reading, a child who can read is not guaranteed to be successful in elementary school, but a child who cannot is guaranteed to be a failure (Slavin et al., 1996).

The support systems incorporated in the SFA program are designed to address the issues and concerns of the four vital dimensions of school change. Exploring these support systems from a technical, normative, political, and socio-cultural perspective helps us understand not only the interconnection between these factors and the important individual contributions they make to ensuring that all students are successful, but also how the program is replicable on a national scale.

Technical Considerations

Of the four dimensions of change that help us better understand urban school reform, the technical dimension is the most pragmatic. This dimension involves changes in school structures, strategies, and practices. Exploring SFA's technical dimension illuminates the

program's commitment to integrate theory and practice. Many of the structural components of SFA are research-based and are documented as effective educational practices. Moreover, SFA is not a program of new innovative technologies, but rather a collection of effective teaching strategies combined with organizational and curricular changes that support the changes that take place at the classroom level. The SFA model is a comprehensive package of effective teaching and organizational strategies that have proven to provide and expand the learning opportunities of students at risk. One principal in a school where few families have books available in their homes stated that their participation in SFA has created a real love for reading in her students. She felt very strongly that if the program is implemented in the way that it is designed, students will become successful readers and enjoy reading.

In this current research, preliminary data suggest that there are three technologies that serve as the technical foundation of the program and contribute to its success as a schoolwide restructuring effort:

1. SFA provides a schoolwide reading curriculum.

Although Success for All is a comprehensive reform package, the heart of the instructional program is reading (Slavin et al., 1996). Success for All uses a reading curriculum based on practices known to be effective in beginning reading (Slavin et al., 1996). A variety of instructional methods are used in the implementation of the program. Educators are encouraged to teach concepts and skills in various ways. This provides reinforcement and also allows the curriculum to incorporate the learning strengths of every child. The reading program emphasizes cooperative learning activities built around several important reading strategies: partner reading; identification of characters, settings, problems and problem solutions in narratives; story summarization; writing, and direct instruction in reading comprehension skills. As part of the program, schools agree to require students to read books of their own choice for twenty minutes at home each evening (Slavin, Madden, & Dolan, 1994).

2. SFA restructures the school's schedule.

One of the most important components of the SFA program is a "sacred" 90-minute reading block. The commitment on the part of the school administration to give priority to a 90-minute reading block is vital to the implementation of the program. During this block, in most SFA schools, the entire school community is focused on one goal: teaching kids to read. Many schools have instituted policies stating that no announcements are to be made, no field trips are to occur, and no students are to leave the classrooms until after the 90-minute reading block.

While securing a sacred 90-minute reading block is vital to the success of students' reading, a serendipitous benefit of this reform strategy is the fact that the entire school community is focused on a common goal. Having a common goal, for many school communities, has served as a catalyst for unprecedented collaboration and cooperation across grades and subjects. Teachers find that they not only share students, but also interests in materials and instructional practices.

3. SFA establishes a safety net for those students at greatest risk of school failure: one-to-one tutoring.

Research suggests that one-to-one tutoring is the most effective form of instruction known (Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989; Wasik & Slavin, 1993). It is one of the most important elements of the SFA program. Both formal and informal tutoring opportunities are built into the design of the program. On the assumption that the primary function of tutoring is prevention, not remediation, first grade students receive priority for formal tutoring. Certified teachers often serve as tutors. They provide one-to-one tutoring to students who are in danger of falling behind. Tutors work with students on mastering the reading materials of the regular reading curriculum. Tutoring sessions are twenty minutes in duration and occur outside the 90-minute reading block.

Schools with stronger implementations of the program tend to offer informal tutoring opportunities as well. Informal tutoring opportunities are presented in a variety of creative ways. Many schools provide expanded learning opportunities beyond the traditional school day. One example of this is the "Breakfast Club." The Breakfast Club gives students the opportunity to arrive at school about half an hour early, to have a hot breakfast, and then to read with a volunteer tutor. These volunteer tutors are parents, grandparents, older students, and various members of the community. Many schools also create tutoring opportunities for students after school. Some after-school programs have a tutoring component built in. The informal tutoring components of SFA help school communities and students understand the importance of literacy.

Normative Considerations

The second lens that can help us better understand urban school reform provides a normative perspective. This perspective exposes the values, ethos, and attitudes that drive policy and practice within urban schools. One of the prevailing attitudes or beliefs in many urban school communities is that parents in these communities do not care about the education

of their children. Many teachers believe that parents in urban areas have relinquished all responsibility for making sure that their children are properly educated. The adoption of SFA has challenged this norm in many schools.

Through the work of the Family Support Teams, families are invited to participate in the education of their children in more positive ways. Programs have been developed to help families feel more welcomed in the school environment. Families are encouraged to develop a partnership with the school to ensure a quality education for their students. The increased family involvement in some of these schools has caused some school communities to realize that the lack of family participation in these schools was not an issue of not caring, but of not feeling welcomed to participate.

One of the principals indicated that the adoption of SFA is helping her faculty to see that the parents in the community do care about their kids. She said, "The parents in this community are very much caring, they are very much concerned about their children....Of course they are." She indicated that the parents in her school community, just like all parents, want their children to be better educated than they are and to have a better life.

Often, school norms are not recognized and acknowledged until they are violated. In particular, three important norms are challenged by the adoption of SFA: norms regarding which students can learn, what students can learn, and how students should learn. As Oakes argues, school reform that fails to pay attention to the normative dimensions of change will be given reluctant compliance at best. New strategies will be forced into traditional policies and practices.

For SFA to be effective, teachers must "buy-in" to the norms of the program. Our research suggests that the norms of the program are sometimes openly resisted in two major areas: special education and bilingual education. Despite the fact that the SFA program is designed to assist all students in developing strong reading skills and has documented success in helping both special and bilingual education students, some schools believe that certain students do not have the capacity to be good readers. Many school communities believe that certain populations of students require skills and attention that are not provided within the context of SFA. One such school in Florida fought with the district to allow their non-English speaking students to be exempted from the SFA program until they had been at the school long enough to be part of an eight-week assessment. SFA policies recommend rapid movement and incorporation of non-English speaking students in English reading classes if native language instruction is not an option. The principal at this school argued that it is difficult to teach a child English if they have no prior oral language development skills. She stated,

> We had many meetings with the bilingual department, the district people, and I think this year they finally heard some of the screams that our teachers have had because now it's different....One of their concerns was, how can you teach reading to a child who does not even know anything in English, without having some type of oral language development. So now our level one and level two students, the first eight weeks, especially the level two students, they're having that oral language development, using ESL strategies, ESL techniques, using the ESL district recommended textbooks, rather than SFA....After the first assessment, using the SFA placement, those children who we think can be mainstreamed into the regular SFA program are taken out of that particular environment.

Embedded within the structure and organization of SFA are a set of norms for what constitutes a strong reading program and a strong elementary school. The adoption of these norms changes the way schools function. Schools are transformed into institutions of collaboration and partnership and places where all children are given the opportunity to be successful. Because of the traditional norms which have guided policy and practice in schools, many children are not thought of as capable of success. One facilitator stated that it was difficult to change the norms in her school because of how some of the teachers view the students. She said,

> A lot of people believe that the kids are so far behind that they'll never catch up. You know, they'll never make any gains. They have a negative attitude about the kids. And that's a tremendous barrier, you know, that will stop the kid in their tracks immediately. Right? Why bother? They say the kids are three years behind, or they are two years behind, and what difference am I going to make?

As long as the norms of schools maintain that some kids can never be successful, then many kids will not be successful in school. Consequently, SFA seeks to establish a normative climate that says that all children can succeed.

Political Considerations

The third lens of analysis is the political lens. The political dimension of school reform focuses on how, when, and which individuals participate in reform. This is a particularly important aspect of SFA because the reform attempts to alter relationships among educators, administrators, and parents. The important issue here is how the school builds the flexibility and capacity to make its structures serve its normative and technical goals. According to the qualitative research, two of the most salient political issues that influence the successful implementation of the program are schoolwide "buy-in" and participation in a local support network.

1. Schoolwide "buy-in"

According to the design of the program, 80% of a school's faculty has to vote for the adoption of SFA before the implementation of the program. One elementary school in Arizona took a year to explore the questions and concerns its faculty had before they voted on the adoption of the program. While many school communities are not afforded this luxury, for this school community the strategy worked very well. The facilitator stated,

> We decided we were ready for a vote. I decided not to take a yes/no vote. I decided to do it on a contingency. We voted on a scale from one to five. One being that you absolutely just love the program. You think that this is just what we have been waiting for. Let's just go for it....The middle there would be, 'I'm a little concerned about my role and how this is going to work, but I believe that we need to make a change and I will be supportive of the program.' And five being, 'I hate this. I will sabotage it if necessary to get my way.' And do you know that we had somebody who voted a five? We had one person who voted five. Almost everybody else who voted realized that after really talking this through, that we needed a change. We had to do something. They felt like this might be what we should go for. And so, we ended up with a ninety-five percent vote.

Although 95% of the faculty gave their vote of approval for the program, they were not all completely sold. In fact the facilitator herself expressed some concern about the program. She said she told them: "For myself, when I voted...I said, 'I can't vote a one.' I can't say, 'I think this is it.' Because I don't know until we try." From the very inception of the program, this voting strategy empowered the teachers to know that they had a voice in the reform process. Consequently, the educators at this school have taken full ownership of the program, and are working hard to make sure all of their students are successful.

For the Arizona school, the voting process worked out. However, several school officials talked about how the voting process did not ensure full participation of the faculty in the reform effort. At several schools the perception was that SFA was a reform initiative that came from the top down. Several school site facilitators spoke very candidly about how the teachers at their school felt that this was a program supported by someone at the district level or by their principal, and the faculty did not feel like they had a voice in the decision. A good example of this is in one Maryland elementary school. SFA was seen as a political move on the part of the principal to secure additional funding. Teachers felt as though they were forced to adopt the program. This strategy jeopardized the integrity of the implementation process at the school. The principal stated,

> We had a lot of teachers go in and do that whole big voting procedure...but then the thing that we did that made it really work is that I didn't care whether they liked it or not; they didn't have to say they liked it, they had to vote to have it. Some people did not want to teach the Roots at all; they told me they hated it, they couldn't do it. And so I didn't make them. Then they did the Wings. And some of them didn't really do the Wings, they did their own thing. And then we had other people who were into it. We had teachers pushing from both ends. We had people who were not sold on it a hundred percent, but gave it a fair shake.

We learn from this example that a "yes" vote for adoption does not always translate into a "yes" vote for implementation.

2. Participation in a local support network

Success for All schools are increasingly joining forces with each other to create local support networks. These networks are being formed between schools in and across districts. The size and function of these networks vary across the country. Of the many benefits of participating in one of these networks, two seem to be most salient: access to information, and the support of a group that understands the struggles of implementing the program.

In most schools, the school site facilitator is the individual designated to be involved in a network. While there is general agreement that creating an SFA support network is important, several school site facilitators discussed the difficulty of securing time to meet with others in the network and felt that much of what they talk about could be discussed over the telephone. But the facilitators agreed that the personal meeting with others in their position not only strengthens the implementation of their program but helps them deal emotionally with the stress of the position. One facilitator in Texas, commenting on how network participation helps her to cope with the difficulties of the job, stated,

> We meet once a month with all of the facilitators in our area. And that has been very, very powerful because we all have a lot of the same stories. What happens in this role is, we become separate from the staff. But we're really not administration. So it's kind of a lonely spot a lot of times. So, I think, just preparing us for some of that. That there are going to be difficult days. That there are going to be times when you're going to have deal with teachers on issues that are not easy. And there are times when the answer is no...I've talked to other people in the field, everybody experienced this, but none of us knew that we were going to experience it. A lot of times it is difficult because the teachers are supposed to see me in two roles — as a peer and then their advocate and their helper — but when there's a problem, how do you go in and say, "You really need to do this." Sometimes they resent that because I'm their peer.

Socio-Cultural Considerations

The socio-cultural dimension of school change within the context of Success for All, involves a variety of issues. The most salient issue in our research is the high level of poverty in which many SFA schools are located. High levels of poverty create the biggest socio-cultural challenge to the successful replication and scaling up of the program. High levels of poverty affect areas of school reform such as parental involvement, student mobility rates, attendance rates, and basic issues of hygiene for students. One facilitator who commented on the poverty level at her school said,

> The students don't have school supplies. Some don't have clothing appropriate for the weather. Some don't have a place in their home that's well lit. Very few have their very own books. When it rains, if their sneakers get wet, they don't have another pair of shoes to wear to school the next day. Poverty is the pits, I mean, it's terrible.

The incorporation of a Family Support Team in the SFA model explicitly confronts these issues. Given the targeted population for the program, the challenges that many SFA students face in attaining success in school are not always academic. Many students in SFA schools are confronted with obstacles to their learning that many adults would have difficulty overcoming. The levels of drug use, crime, and violence in some of the SFA school neighborhoods require school officials to respond to the physical, emotional, and psychological, as well as the academic, needs of children. Recognizing the realities of these conditions and instituting a Family Support Team can make the difference between success for some and success for all.

The Family Support Team is integrated into the academic program of the school. It receives referrals from teachers and tutors of students who may need some type of assistance. The Family Support Team intervenes when a student's learning potential is inhibited by his/her life situation. Families with students who are not receiving proper sleep or nutrition, are not receiving medical attention, or are not attending school regularly are offered assistance. Families are instructed in ways to better equip their students for success in school. In many school communities, a variety of classes are offered to parents to help them improve their own life situation, which in turn helps them improve life for their children.

Discussion

Exploring the dimensions of the scaling up process of SFA illuminates important individual, yet interconnected facets of whole-school change. This research suggests that fundamental change in schools occurs and is sustained when the technical, normative, political and socio-cultural dimensions of schooling are given thoughtful and serious consideration throughout the implementation process. Schools which report success in improving educational outcomes for their students explicitly demonstrate a willingness and ability to confront the challenges that are inherent in the change process. As Elmore (1996) argues, the issue of scale up is understanding the conditions under which school communities use new knowledge, strategies, and innovations to actively change the fundamental processes of schooling. Exploring school change from multiple conceptual lens deepens our understanding of the structures, strategies, practices, and relationships associated with fundamental change in schools.

Since SFA's inception, research has documented its success. Currently the program is in over 700 schools. The challenge for the program as it continues to expand and scale up is maintaining its integrity and quality in the different social, political, and economic contexts in which it will be implemented. If SFA is to serve as a blueprint for urban school reform in the 21st century, it has to continue to document its impact on schools in various contexts on a national scale. This research suggests that the program is broad enough in scope to address the interconnected complexities of teaching and learning, and yet flexible enough to adapt to the local context in which the program is being implemented.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The positive effects of SFA have caused the number of schools adopting the program to increase substantially each year. Interest in the program continues to grow and is likely to increase even more rapidly in the next few years. Given recent changes in Title I funding, many urban schools are looking for ways to improve the education of their children through schoolwide projects. The majority of the schools adopting SFA are using Title I dollars to fund the program, thus it is anticipated that many more schools will be adopting SFA in the near future.

As practitioners, policymakers, and researchers search for innovations and strategies to improve public education in the new millennium, particularly for those students at greatest

risk of school failure, the focus must be on schoolwide restructuring efforts. Reform in the new millennium will have to be vastly different from the "fix it" approach of the 1980s. The "fix it" approach was a piecemeal attempt to respond to an educational system that was ignoring changing social conditions and the changing educational needs of childre. . As the number of research studies confirming that the current educational system is failing to meet the needs of our youth grows, it is essential that new reform strategies be comprehensive and able to fundamentally change the organization and operation of schools. Narrowly defined programs or projects which aim to alter particular aspects of the schooling process cannot bring about the type of change needed to prepare students in the 21st century. If SFA proves to be a viable alternative for systemic urban school reform in the next millennium, success for all will not only have a new meaning in public education, but perhaps in society at large.

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